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HISTORY OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY, ALABAMA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to trace the history of Mobile County, Alabama, from its beginning to the present.

The problem involved is to show how the settlers met the vicissitudes of fortune and progressed from pioneers in the wilderness, beset with difficulties, to a wealthy and influential people.

The method used is primarily that of historical research. In the first chapter I have undertaken to show the location of the county, name, area, soils, climate, and timber.

In the second chapter it was my purpose to tell about the aborigines, political growth, and development of the county.

In the third chapter I have explained the farm problem, population, highway, railroads, and public institutions.

Chapter IV is a brief history of the leading towns of Mobile County.

Most of the material was found in the Tennessee State Library, Carnegie Library, and Vanderbilt University Library in Nashville, while some was found in the Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, Alabama, and some in the Archives of Brewton, Alabama.

Some reliable unpublished material has been used, and a few personal interviews have been mentioned.

The materials collected by the late Dr. Thomas H. Owen, of the Alabama State Department of Archives and History, made the study possible.

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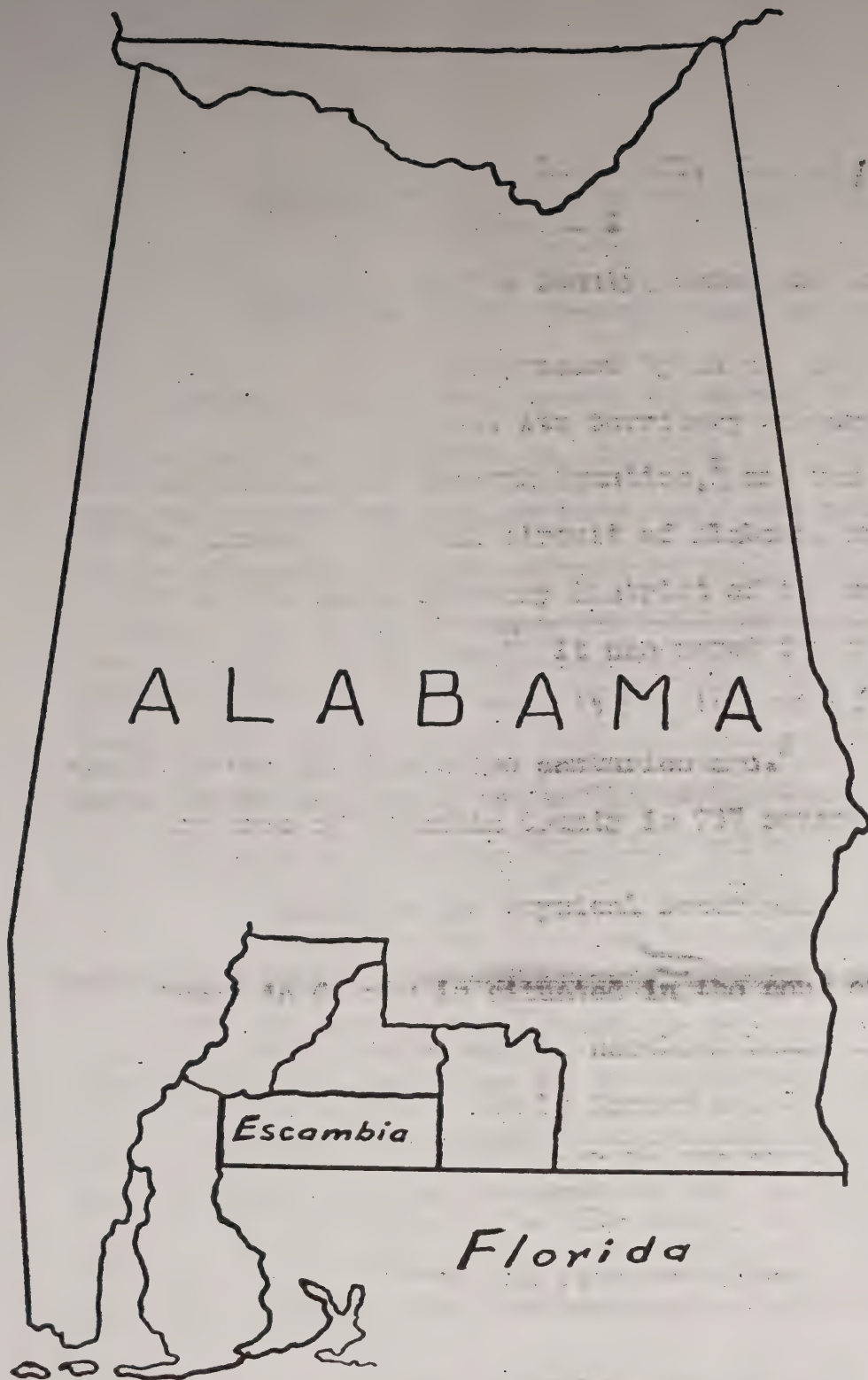
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ALABAMA



Map of Alabama. History of Alabama, DuBose.

HISTORY OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY, ALABAMA

CHAPTER I

Formation of the County, Name, and Area

Escambia County was created by an act of the legislature December 10, 1868. Its territory was originally a part of Baldwin and Conecuh Counties,¹ and was made a part of the eleventh judicial circuit of Alabama, and was made a part of the fifth chancery district of the southern chancery division of Alabama.² It was named for the clear and broad river which is formed within its limits, and was christened by the Spaniards two centuries ago.³

The area of Escambia County is 957 square miles.⁴

Location and Physical Description

Escambia County is situated in the southern section of the state, and lies along the northern boundary of Florida. It is bounded on the north by Monroe and Conecuh, on the east by Covington, on the south by the state line, and on the west by Baldwin County. The county is fifty-four miles long from east to west, and eighteen miles wide from north

1. Acts of the General Assembly, 397-400, 1868.

2. Ibid., 418.

3. H. Brower, Alabama, 246.

4. United States Census, 1, 93, 1920.

to south. It presents no striking elevations. It is drained by the Conecuh River, which flows across its entire area. This river follows a winding course, and near the Florida line are many dead rivers and lakes in the low bottoms. The principal tributaries of the Conecuh River are Sagulga River and Murder Creek. Just below the town of Brewton Burnt Corn flows into Murder Creek.⁵ Escambia River, now usually noted as Little Escambia Creek, flows in a southerly direction through the county, and with its tributaries drains the central part. Big Escambia Creek enters the county near Conley. The Escambia flows into the Conecuh just below Flomaton, and together they form the Escambia River, which discharges into the Gulf through Escambia Bay. The Perdido drains the southwestern section and Little River the northwestern section of the county. The county lies wholly within the coastal plain, and is divided generally into two physiographic divisions, the uplands and lowlands. The uplands consist of a series of broad ridges and divides, broken by a well developed drainage system. This division in early geographic times was a great plain, the rivers of which were marked by the tops of the present ridges which have a general altitude of 500 feet above sea level. The lowlands comprise the river bottoms. The surface varies from level or gently rolling to rolling.⁶

5. 1901 Survey of Escambia County, Alabama, 5.

6. Idem., 6.

Soils

Twenty-eight soil types are represented, including swamp. These include uplands, bottom lands or alluvial soils. The soils of the upland division vary from gravelly sand and gravelly sandy loam to sandy loam and fine sandy loam and clay. Much of the bottom lands are subject to overflow.⁷ Evidence has been found at Brewton, both at depths of six hundred feet and nine hundred feet, that the ground at those depths once contained oyster beds. In boring a well at the present ice factory at Brewton a cypress log was found at a depth of four hundred feet (1912.).⁸

Climate

The climate of the county is mild and temperate. The summers are long, with a mean temperature of 80.2° F. for the summer months. The proximity of the Gulf serves to give a general uniformity to the temperature throughout the year. South winds prevail during the summer, and the nights are cool and pleasant. The winters are mild. The mean winter temperature is 50.9° F. The mean annual rainfall is 57.93 inches.⁹

7. Ibid.

8. Mr. M. Leigh McMillen, interview, September 3, 1939.

9. Soil Survey, op. cit., 8.

Thomas Mallery Owen, History of Alabama, 1, 547-548.

Timber

At the time of the earliest settlement of the area now included in Escambia County the uplands were covered with long leaf yellow pine, oak, poplar, birch, elm, ash, ironwood, gum, magnolia, cypress, bay, and sycamore, the cane being confined to the lower bottoms.¹⁰ But the glory of Escambia is her magnificent forests of pine. In this county the expansive domains of yellow or long leaf pine may be seen in perfection. These pines give rise to the chief industries of the county, timber, lumber, and turpentine business. Some of the finest and best equipped saw-mills and turpentine distilleries known to the South are found in Escambia County. Timbers are hewn from the forests and rafted along the large streams to the mills to be converted into lumber, or else to Pensacola, where a ready market awaits them.¹¹

Artesian Prospects

Deep borings for Artesian water have as yet been confined to the vicinity of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, mainly at Brewton, Herrington, Flomaton, and Atmore,

¹⁰ U. S. Soil Survey, op. cit., 9.

¹¹ H. A. Davis Smith and H. A. Baland, Northern Alabama 235.

F. P. Riley, Alabama as It Is, 190.

but flowing wells should be obtained by moderately deep borings elsewhere in the county where the altitude is not too great.¹²

Most of the Artesian wells in the county are at Brewton and in its immediate vicinity. The shallowest of the flowing wells are only forty feet deep; the deepest nearly 400 feet. The water from this level is decidedly limy or magnesian.¹³

The deepest boring made in Escambia County is a well bored for oil on the banks of Conecuh River six miles above Roberts. A great volume of water was struck at less than 700 feet. It was estimated that, when half shut off, this flow was 3000 gallons per minute, and much greater before being reduced. The water which pours out of this well is beautifully clear and blue, such as is seen in limestone springs, and is very limy.¹⁴

12. Eugene Allen Smith, The Underground Water Resources of Alabama, 309.

13. Ibid., 270.

14. Ibid., 273-274.

CHAPTER II

The Indians

At the time of the discovery of Alabama, the various nations who are classed under the Muskohi stock occupied the broad and pleasant lowlands of the territory which is now Escambia County. The remains of a few other stocks indicate that the Muskohis were not its original occupants, and this was also their own opinion. Their legends referred to the west and the northwest as the direction whence their ancestors had wandered.¹ The early culture of the Muskohi tribes is faithfully depicted in the records of the campaign of Hernando De Soto, who journeyed through this country in 1540. The early Muskohis were in the highest culture of the stone age; nor were they deficient wholly in metals.² Within the horizon of the Muskohi stock were a number of small tribes speaking languages totally different. We may reasonably suppose them to have been the remains of the ancient population who held the land before the Muskohis had descended upon it from the north and west.³ Pickett also thinks the Muskohis were not the original inhabitants.⁴

1. Daniel G. Brinton, The American Race, 85.

2. Id., 87.

3. Id., 89.

4. Albert James Pickett, History of Alabama, 2, 74 - 80.

Political Growth

This territory was claimed by Spain by right of the discoveries of Columbus, the grant of the Pope, and the various Spanish expeditions. England claimed it by right of the discoveries of Cabot; while France could advance no better title than might be derived from the voyage of Verrazano, 1498, and vague traditions of earlier visits of Breton adventurers. On a map of the time of Henry II of France, all North America is named Terra Florida,⁵ while the Bay of St. Mary was marked by Spanish maps after the year 1549.⁶

The early Spanish expeditions probably did not reach so far north as Escambia County, but this is not known. Pamfilo De Narvaez in 1528 wandered not very far away, but there is not sufficient evidence to prove that his ill-fated expedition reached Escambia County.⁷ De Narvaez exhibited no enterprise in exploring the country around him. He was really in the midst of a rich, populous, and abundant

5. Francis Parkman, Pioneers of France, 12-13.

6. George Bancroft, History of the United States, 1, 31-32.

7. A.D. Koch, American Explorations in North American History, 214.

George Bancroft, Op. Cit., 37-38.

Robert J. Hamilton, Colonial Mobile, 13.

country, but was incompetent for the position of a leader.⁸

De Vaca's narrative of the expedition and shipwreck of Narvaez and of his own personal adventures is exceedingly interesting, as containing the observations of the first European who traversed the region now known as the Cotton States,⁹ and who, no doubt, wandered through Escambia County. This section was described by Hakluyt and De Vaca as the richest country of the world.¹⁰

Hernando De Soto, a native of Spain, in 1540, very probably marched through Escambia on his way to Mobile where he fought the famous battle of Mauvilla, but his route is not definitely known; since all expeditions from his direction came through Escambia, it is not likely that he avoided it; and it is a well known fact that the Spaniards marched in a zigzag fashion, and sometimes in a circuit. The numerous razor-backs¹¹ throughout the county might be the progeny of some of De Soto's supply of hogs. Bourne characterizes this expedition as the most remarkable exploring expedition in the history of North America,¹² while Payne and

8. George R. Fairbanks, History of Florida, 35.

9. Ibid., 46.

10. Ibid., 43.

11. Seward Gaylord Bourne, Spain in America, 165.

12. Ibid., 168.

Beasley say that De Soto's unfortunate expedition in search of the North American Peru is one of the best known episodes in American history.¹³

Don Tristan de Luna in 1559 landed on Pensacola Bay from Vera Cruz. This expedition consisted of 1500 soldiers, who wandered through Escambia, going as far north as Camden, Alabama. De Luna's men wandered aimlessly through Alabama, but met many hardships, and were recalled by the Viceroy of Mexico. Thus ended the most considerable and best appointed expedition which had ever landed on the shores of Florida. De Luna established the fact that Spaniards occupied the shores of the Bay of Pensacola in 1561, and that the whole of the region was known to them.¹⁴

That Spain should have neglected the region where the English were to lay the foundations of a great nation and to embody on a grander scale their most valuable contributions to the political life of mankind, may seem strange, yet it was wholly natural. Empire not plantation appealed to Spain; for she had little surplus population, and too many political irons in the fire to do every thing for which opportunity offered.¹⁵

13. H. H. Henshaw and J. L. Beasley, History of Alabama, London.

14. De Luna, pp. 213, 22-23.

15. De Luna, pp. 213, 214.

Spanish activity was principally confined to the settlement of East Florida, but her authority was supposed to extend indefinitely. When the Huguenots first made their appearance in 1562 and 1564, Spain was determined, once and for all, to settle the question of her sovereignty over Florida.¹⁶ Thus the story of New France opens with a tragedy. In 1565 St. Augustine was settled, but Spain had never abandoned her claim to that territory, where, if she had not planted colonies, she had buried many hundreds of her bravest sons. Should the proud Philip II abandon a part of his dominions to France,¹⁷ The tragedy was the end of French colonization on the southern mainland for nearly a century and a half; and the end forever of the attempts to establish a Huguenot refuge and power on this side of the sea. Their contribution to American life was to be made as individuals, a sturdy leaven in a congenial though foreign society.¹⁸ On the other hand, neither Menéndez nor his descendants succeeded in founding a flourishing Spanish community in Florida. Equally without permanent success were the repeated efforts of missionary bands to convert the Indians.¹⁹

16. Bancroft, op. cit., 51-52.

17. Ibid., 51-55. Carlson, op. cit., 96-127.

18. Bourne, op. cit., 100.

19. Ibid.

The achievements of La Salle and other later French explorers, however, pale before the exploits of the Spaniards of the previous age. In colonization and conquest we find the same disparity.²⁰

Spain had insisted that the Gulf of Mexico was a closed sea of its own. Louis XIV denied the assumption, ordered his ships of war to disregard it, and wished a convenient post somewhere on the Mississippi River from which a descent into the sea could readily be made; therefore, La Salle descended the Mississippi River and took possession of tributaries to the Gulf in 1682 for France.²¹

But the honor of colonizing the southwest of our republic belongs to the illustrious Canadian, Lemoine Iberville. The most skillful naval officer in the service of France, the idol of his countrymen, after the peace of Ryswick he sought and obtained a commission for establishing direct intercourse between France and the Mississippi.²²

The fort of Pensacola had been established in 1699 by 300 Spaniards from Vera Cruz. This prior occupation is the reason why, afterward, Pensacola remained a part of Florida, and the dividing line between that province and Louisiana

20. Ibid., 194.

21. Barroff, op. cit., 2, 168.

22. Ibid., 187.

was drawn between the bays of Pensacola and Mobile.²³ In 1719, the French captured Pensacola and expected to extend their influence to the Atlantic, but by the treaty of 1721 it reverted to Spain.²⁴ These were questions which were never to be settled amicably.

The conflict which followed has come down in history as the French and Indian War. It ought to have been called the war for possession. When it was over, French power in America was gone.²⁵

"England," said the king, "never signed such a peace before, nor, I believe, any other power in Europe." England received the Floridas, Louisiana to the Mississippi, but without the island of New Orleans. On February 10, 1763 the Treaty of Paris was ratified.²⁶

The period of British possession of the Floridas embraces twenty years, and includes the era of the American Revolution. As from this fact it has a peculiar interest, and has never been described by any writer. When the British evacuated the province some years after, they carried with them all the documents referring to this period, and deposited them in Somerset House, London, where according to

23. III., 188.

24. III., 229.

25. John Bach Mc Master, A History of the People of the United States, 7: 44.

26. Bancroft, op. cit., 55-56.

positive information, says the Spanish Surveyor General, Vincent Pintado, they were to be found in 1817, and undoubtedly remain. ²⁷

In 1779 England declared war against Spain. Galvez, a gallant young Spanish governor of Louisiana, made a dash upon the English forts in the south, capturing one after another before the British could interfere. By 1781 all West Florida was in possession of the Spanish, and thus England lost control of the Gulf coast. ²⁸

Mississippi Territory

No sooner did England come into possession of her share of territory than she proceeded to cut it up. From the junction of the Yazoo and Mississippi Rivers she drew a line due east along a parallel, about $32^{\circ} 28'$, to the Appalachicola, and down that river to the Gulf, and named the country thus enclosed West Florida. To what is now the State of Florida east of the Appalachicola River she gave the present bounds and the name East Florida. During twenty years these bounds and names remained undisturbed; then, in 1783, Great Britain made the north boundary of West Florida the parallel of 31° from the Mississippi to the Appalachicola, and gave the two Floridas to Spain. ²⁹

²⁷. Reed, op. cit., 85-86.

²⁸. Ibid., 91-93.

²⁹. Spanish State Papers, Land, 3, 165.
Galvez, op. cit., 33.

Spain thus received the two Floridas from England and not from France. When, therefore, in 1800, by the secret treaty of San Ildefonso, Spain bound herself to return Louisiana to France, she bound herself to give back what France had given her in 1763, and not what England had given her in 1763. The treaty of 1800 was a treaty of cession. Spain then gave back to France what France had given to her in 1763. In 1763 Spain did not own West Florida. She could not, therefore, in 1800, have ceded it to France. Jefferson and Madison, however, wished to include West Florida.⁵⁰

In 1803 France had ceded to the United States what she had received from Spain in 1800, and what she received in 1800 was a retrocession of what she ceded to Spain in 1763, and what she ceded to Spain in 1763 was the territory west of the Mississippi. Florida she gave to England.⁵¹

But the real limits of the country, acquired by the United States by the treaty of Ildefonso, are not publicly ascertained to this day; it is possible that this portion made a part of Louisiana, and ought to have been transferred with the rest of the United States; but how could the world know this, when the American Government did, to all appearances, acquiesce in the

⁵⁰ W. H. Webster, op. cit., 54.
⁵¹ Ibid., 60.

boundaries established by Spain? It is universally known that Spain was permitted to remain in possession of Florida for a long time subsequent to October 1, 1800. The Government of the Union paid duties on public goods in American vessels passing the Mobile River.³²

The disputed territory which extended from the Mississippi to the Chattahoochee was finally evacuated, the United States, with the consent of Georgia, which also laid claim to the land by reason of her charter, established a territorial form of government for the district.³³ This was the original Mississippi Territory of which Escambia County was a part. In 1800 an elective assembly was authorized,³⁴ and in 1802 Georgia relinquished her claim.³⁵ In 1804 the boundary was extended northward to the Tennessee line,³⁶ and thus the Territory included all that land which is embraced by the present states of Alabama and Mississippi, except the land lying below the thirty-first degree of latitude.

32. American State Papers, Lands, 3, 234.

33. Statutes at Large, 2, 229-235.

34. Ibid., 435-436.

35. American State Papers, Lands, 304-335.

36. Statutes at Large, 2, 445-446.

Within this extensive area there were no white settlements in what is now Escambia County.³⁷ While the Indians in the northern part of the state were absorbing what civilization they could, and remaining friendly with the whites, the Creeks, on the contrary, were warlike and not inclined to adapt themselves to the new situation. The strength of their confederacy and the fact that their lands bordered upon Spanish Florida may help to explain their relative independent attitude.³⁸

The articles exported from Mobile and Pensacola, in 1772, were indigo, raw hides, corn, fine cattle, tallow, rice, pitch, bear's oil, tobacco, tar, squared timber, indigo seed, myrtle wax, cedar posts and planks, salted wild beef, pecan nuts, cypress and pine boards, plank of various woods, shingles, dried salt fish, scentling, sassafras, camos, staves and heading, hoops, oranges, and peltry.

Cotton was not enumerated among the articles of export, but it is mentioned as having been, at that time, cultivated to some extent, and machines for separating the lint from the seed were in use.³⁹

37. Thomas Perkins Abernethy, The Formative Period in Alabama, 9.

38. Ibid., 15.

39. Pickett, op. cit., 2, 10.

Spain and England made large grants of land to the inhabitants of this country as their subjects. The Spanish grants covered many tracts for which British patents had previously been issued; and hence the conflicting claims to a great portion of the most valuable settled lands in the Mississippi Territory. The adjustment of these conflicting claims gave the United States Government a great deal of trouble.⁴⁰

This portion of the Mississippi Territory was utterly defenceless, entirely isolated, and surrounded by Indian nations, on the north, east, and west, while the treacherous Spaniards were just below, at Mobile. To protect it, the Federal Government established a post upon the first bluff below the confluence of the Tombigbee and Alabama. Captain Shaumburg, of the 2nd regiment, marched from Hatches, with two companies, and built in 1799 a stockade, with one bastion, which was called Fort Stoddart, and was situated on the site of the present arsenal landing of Mount Vernon.⁴¹

Governor Sargent issued another proclamation in 1800 defining the limits of Washington County, embracing the population upon the Tombigbee and Alabama. Of all counties that ever were established, it was by far the most extensive

⁴⁰. American State Papers, Lands, 3, 165-167.

⁴¹. Pickett, op. cit., 2, 179.

in territory. It extended to the Chattahoochee on the east, and to Pearl River on the west, and was bounded on the south by the line of $31^{\circ} 28'$.⁴²

In 1803 the United States bought from France all her possessions in America. The United States claimed the Perdido River as the eastern limit of the Louisiana Purchase. Spain claimed that Mobile had been completely cut off from Louisiana by the Treaty of Paris, and that she held the city by right of conquest from the British.⁴³ General James Wilkinson moved against it with American troops and captured it April 15, 1813.⁴⁴

Just before the War of 1812 broke out, and Tecumseh undertook to unite all the western Indians against the United States, he visited the Creeks at one of their great councils, and the younger warriors were incited to war against the whites. Though the older chiefs remained peaceful, the war party was strong and presently took matters into its own hands.⁴⁵

The Indians of Escambia County insist that a meeting between Tecumseh and the chiefs - Weatherford, Pushmataha, Osceola, and others - took place at Atmore in the northern

42. Ibid., 180.

43. Mc Master, op. cit., 3, 209-215.

44. Ibid., 4, 188.

45. Mc Master, op. cit., 3, 535-536.

edge of town at Indian Pond, which pond is never dry; it was here that they were committed to war, and marched to Fort Mims ⁴⁶ - war so cruel to the whites and so fatal to the Creeks.

Burnt Corn Creek

Burnt Corn Creek, a tributary to the Conecuh River, is in Escambia County. The name is derived from a large spring which bursts from beneath the hill below the village of the same name. The spring is situated on the old Pensacola trail, and was a noted camping ground during early Indian times. Near Burnt Corn Springs, in the early years of the nineteenth century, lived the noted Creek Indian half-breed, James Cornells. He is authority for the statement that the name was given because of the finding of a pile of charred or burned corn at the spring, left there by a sick Indian. Many of the hostile Creek Indians wounded at Fort Mims died at Burnt Corn Springs. Near the crossing of the creek and the old Pensacola trail, July 27, 1813, the Burnt Corn Fight, the first engagement of the Creek Indian War of 1813-1814, took place.⁴⁷

46. Mr. James Bailey Padgett (Indian), interview, September 19, 1930.

47. B.F. Riley, History of Conecuh County, 62-63. Owen, op. cit., 179.

Battle of Burnt Corn

The first engagement between the pioneer settlers in the southern part of what is now Alabama, and the hostile Creek Indians, during the Creek Indian War of 1813-1814, occurred July 27, 1813, near Burnt Corn Creek, in the northern part of the present Escambia County.

In the early summer of 1813, large numbers of disaffected Creeks assembled at the Holy Ground on the Alabama River. In July, about 300 warriors left the place, under the command of Peter Mc Queen, Jim Boy, and Josiah Francis, for Pensacola. There they expected to secure ammunition for the impending war. On the way some hostile acts were committed. It was subsequently learned, through spies, that army supplies were furnished them at Pensacola by British agents and Spanish citizens.

On information reaching the Tombigbee settlements, Colonel James Caller, senior militia officer of Washington County, at once organized an expedition to intercept the Creeks on their return to the nation. At the head of three small companies, Colonel Caller crossed the Tombigbee; he received reinforcements, so that finally his entire command numbered about 180 men, composed of white men, half breeds, and friendly Indians. On the night of July 26, he camped near the present Bellville, and the next morning took the

line of march down the Pensacola trail.

The forces met and fought the Battle of Burnt Corn, so called from the name of the creek on which it occurred. The battle opened with advantage to the Americans, but after the Indians had been driven from their camp, the Americans began to gather the spoils and to catch the Indian ponies. The Indians fired from the woods upon the whites in the open, charged with yells, and throw them into confusion and flight. The brave deeds and daring efforts of the officers failed to check the rout of the Americans. It was afterwards considered a disgrace to have been in this battle.⁴⁸

Treaty of Fort Jackson

General Andrew Jackson broke the power of the Creek Indians at Horschoe Bend, March 27, 1814, and by the treaty of Fort Jackson August 9, 1814, the Indians were compelled to cede lands that opened up half the present area of the State to the whites. This cession was demanded as payment and punishment for the expenses and losses of the war. It

48. Heck, op. cit., 244-246.

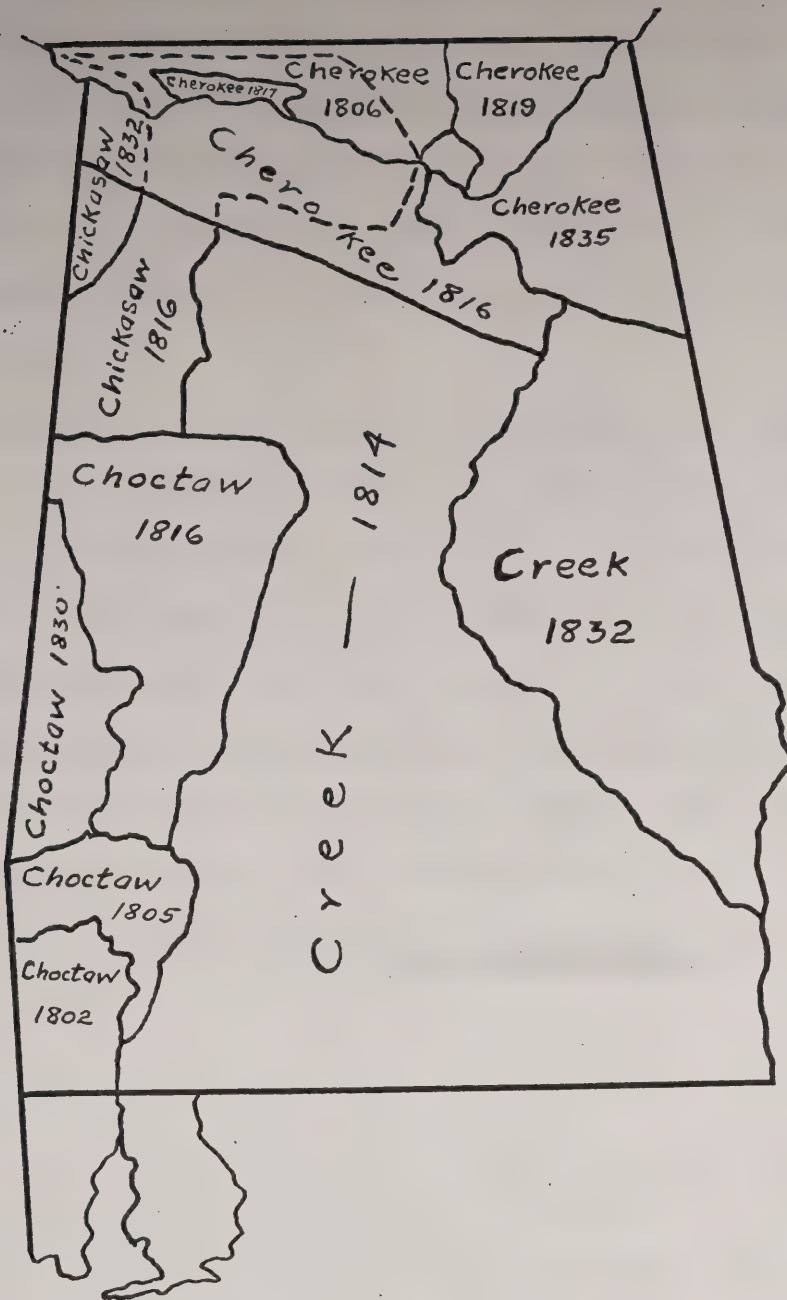
Pickett, op. cit., 255-259.

Riley, op. cit., 16.

Owen, op. cit., 179-180.

Joel Campbell Du Bose, Alabama History, 50-51.

Chap. VI.--Plate 10. Indian Cessions.



Bureau of Ethnology, 18 Annual Report, Plate I.

completely separated the Creek territory from Florida.⁴⁹ Mississippi Territory was indebted to Jackson not only for safety, but also for elbow-room in which to expand.

Governor Holmes, of Mississippi Territory, issued a proclamation on June 29, 1815, incorporating the whole of the Creek cession as Monroe County of which Assembla County was a part.⁵⁰

In 1818 Jackson captured Pensacola from the combined forces of England and Spain, and wrecked the pretense of Spanish sovereignty in Florida.⁵¹ He acted with usual quickness and decision. He marched into Florida, then Spanish territory, paid no attention to the protests of the Spanish governor, garrisoned Spanish forts with American soldiers, and in true Jacksonian style ended the war. He made the nations respect American rights and fighting qualities.⁵² But this episode belongs to National rather than State history.

49. American State Papers, Indian Affairs, Class II, 826-827.
Annals of the Bureau of American
Geography, 1870-71, 173.

50. Governor Holmes, Executive Journal, 1814-1817; Proclamation of June 29, 1815.

51. American State Papers, Indian Affairs, 2, 154.

52. Adams, op. cit., 55-56.

Alabama Territory

The act establishing Alabama Territory was approved March 3, 1817. All laws applying to the old Mississippi Territory were to remain in force until they might be changed. William Wyatt Bibb was appointed Governor. January 12, 1818, the first session of government was held at St. Stephens.⁵³

Ellicott's Line

The boundary line between Alabama and Florida is the line commonly known as the "mound line," or "Ellicott's line," as distinguished from a blazed line, known as the "Upper" or "Coffee line," commencing at a point on the Chattahoochee River, near a place known as "Irwin's Mills;" and thence to the Perdido River, marked the whole distance by blazes on the trees and by mounds of earth, at distances of about one mile.⁵⁴

Documents Translated

In 1829 President John Quincy Adams had all the Spanish and French ordinances affecting titles in Florida and other territories of France and Spain translated into a complete collection and deposited at the Department of State, Washington. It has been computed that the unadjusted land claims

53. Statutes at Large, 3, 371-372.

54. Planning, Official and Statistical Register, 12, 1927.

cover many acres. Their validity depended upon principles of Spanish law, local usages, and the construction of treaties, which sooner or later, had to be investigated and determined before the judicial tribunals of the country; the magnitude of the controversy delayed Congress, depending upon foreign law.⁵⁵

Some documents were collected relative to claims derived from the former British Government of West Florida. These claims cover many acres of land, and appear to be entirely unfounded in law and equity.⁵⁶

Additional Territory

An interesting piece of legislation which enlarged Escambia County was an act to detach and take a portion of the territory of Conecuh County and attach the same to Escambia County. There was a strip of territory south of Escambia in the shape of a triangle that was surveyed three times with varying results, leaving a strip of territory that seemingly did not belong to either county. Through the efforts of Judge John D. Leigh, who drafted a bill which passed the legislature, this land was added to Escambia. The last line

55. American State Papers, Lands, 5, 631-632.

56. Ibid., 633.

was drawn west of Tallahassee Principal Meridian, while the former lines were drawn north of St. Stevens Meridian.⁵⁷

Fort Crawford

Fort Crawford, now in Escambia County, was one of the points earliest settled in Conecuh. It derived its name from an officer in Jackson's command. Benjamin Jernigan seems to have been the first to pitch his tent in this region. He settled within two and a half miles from where Fort Crawford subsequently stood, and on the west side of Burnt Corn Creek, within three quarters of a mile of the present site of Brewton. This was the latter part of 1816, or early in 1817. Not more than two or three settlements had been made in the county at that time. Soon after Mr. Jernigan came here, he was joined by James Thompson, Benjamin Brewton, R.J. Cook, Lotton and Luddy Cotton. At this time the fort was occupied by the Seventh Georgia Regiment. General Jackson was in the habit of visiting the home of Benjamin Jernigan.⁵⁸ The erection of the fort was commenced in 1817. Prior to this time only temporary earthworks had been thrown up. No Indian settlements were then near; but now and then prowling bands would pass through the country, ostensibly on hunting excursions.⁵⁹

57. Final Acts of the Legislature, 1837, 1837.
Journal of the Senate, 1837, September 2, 1837.

58. D.M. Riley, History of Conecuh County, 50.

59. Ibid., 51.

When in 1819, it was determined to erect a court house on the east side of Murder creek, Benjamin Jernigan, R.J. Cook, Allen and Alexander Mc Caskill, Mabry Thomas, and several others were chosen by this community to select a site for its erection. The point fixed upon was Sparta.⁶⁰

In 1858 a telegraphic line of communication was established from Greenville to Mobile. Passing through Conecuh, the enterprising company established an office at Evergreen.⁶¹

The one event of marked interest in Conecuh, during the year 1866, was the removal of the seat of justice from Sparta to Evergreen. Two principal causes contributed to this removal. The first was the total destruction, by fire, of the court house at Sparta, with all the county records, and the second was the growing importance of Evergreen, and its easy accessibility from all portions of the county. Two years later Conecuh lost a portion of her southern territory by the formation of Escambia County.⁶²

60. Ibid., 51.
 61. Ibid., 54.
 62. Ibid., 192.

Early Stage Coach Line

The early stage coach line passed through Local in the northwestern part of the county, where Mr. G. K. Fountain settled and petitioned for a post office in 1898, and named the post office "Local" which was established in his store, the only store at that time between Atmore and Jones's Mill, which is now known as Frisco City in Monroe County. The name was changed from Local to Huxford in 1929.

The first telegraph line followed the old stage coach line that was cut by General Andrew Jackson while on his southern campaigns. A few of the old insulators along this old line can yet be seen grown up in the trees some thirty to forty feet.⁶³

In 1827 the through mail to New Orleans began to come this way. It was carried from Montgomery to Mobile in two-horse wagons.⁶⁴

First Industrial Center

The first industrial center in Escambia County, or in this part of Alabama, was established at or near what was formerly called Mason, not far from the present home of S.L. McGowin. At this point Thomas Mendenhall dammed the

63. Mr. G. K. Fountain, letter to writer January 9, 1931.

64. Mobile Register, November 24, 1827.

creek which is called Mendenhall Creek and utilized the water power in the manufacture of cotton cards, spinning wheels, furniture, and lumber, which flourished during the years 1815-1854. It is around this Mendenhall settlement that practically all of the people who ever engaged in the lumber business in this county were born and reared. It was here that the older McGowins, Foshees, Millers, and Blackshers were born and reared, whose descendants acquired great wealth, and contributed greatly to the development of Escambia County.⁶⁵

Murder Creek

Murder Creek which flows through Escambia County was christened by a tragedy. In 1788 Colonel Kirkland, of South Carolina, with his son, nephew, and several others, stopped at the home of McGillivray on their way to Pensacola; McGillivray sent a servant with them as they left his house that the Indians might know they were friends. A Milleabee Indian, a white man- Cat, and negro Bob murdered them in camp at night in what is now Conecuh County, on the bank of the stream which has ever since been called Murder Creek. Cat was arrested, the

65. The Brewton Trade Record, November 1929.
Letter to writer from Mr. Ed. Leigh McMillan, April 14, 1931.

others escaped. Cat was carried back and hanged. While he was dangling in the air, and kicking in the last agonies, his motions were stopped with a pistol ball. Such is the origin of the name "Murder Creek."⁶⁶

⁶⁶. Pickett, op. cit., 2, 31-32.

CHAPTER III

Escambia County is at present primarily agricultural, with thirteen per cent of the total area of 957 square miles in cultivated fields. The main crops are cotton, corn, potatoes, and strawberries, although many other crops are produced on a small scale. The soil and climate will produce in commercially profitable quantities practically any field, orchard or truck crop that is grown between the Gulf of Mexico and the Ohio River. The county holds second rank in the state in the production of Irish potatoes, and ships from 100 to 200 cars of strawberries each year, in addition to the production of some 12,000 bales of cotton.¹

1. D. Spotswood, Industrial Survey of Atmore, 6, March 8, 1930.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY, ALABAMA

1929

Animals Sold and Eaten and Milk and Eggs Produced

	Number	Gallons	Dozen	Value
Cattle	4,000			\$ 50,000
Hogs	16,000			242,000
Chickens	72,000			47,000
Milk Produced		6,243,000		374,000
Eggs Produced			480,000	149,000

Animals on Farms

January 1, 1930

Workstock	4,000	
Milk cows	4,000	
Other cattle	4,000	
Hogs	15,000	
Chickens	59,000	2

2. F. W. Gist, Alabama Farm Production, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Montgomery, Alabama, February, 1930. No.5, 2-3.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY, ALABAMA, FARM INCOME, 1929

	Acres	Farm Income	Percent	Population	Value
Crops	79,000				\$2,363,000
Live Stock Products					862,000
Aggregate Farm Income		\$3,230,000			
Live Stock			26.7		
Farm Population				11,100	
Income Per Capita					\$290

3

3. F.W. Cist, Alabama Farm Production, U.S. Department of Agriculture,
Montgomery, Alabama, March, 1930. No. 6, 3.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY FARM PRODUCTION

Estimated Acreage Harvested, Production, and Value of Crops, 1929.						
	Acreage	Harvested	Production	and Value of Crops	1929.	
	: Acres	: Bushels	: Tons	: Bales	: Gallons	: Value
Sweet Potatoes	: 1,200	: 102,000	:	:	:	: \$ 92,000
Irish Potatoes	: 4,000	: 260,000	:	:	:	: 377,000
Peanuts	: 2,000	: 24,000	:	:	:	: 18,000
Oats	: 1,000	: 18,000	:	:	:	: 14,000
Cotton	: 42,000	:	:	: 14,000	:	: 1, 230,000
Corn	: 26,000	: 286,000	:	:	:	: 286,000
Hay	: 1,000	:	: 1,000	:	:	: 18,000
Sugar Cane	: 400	:	:	:	: 66,000	: 59,000
Truck Crops	: 900	:	:	:	:	: 149,000
Misc. Crops and Fruits	:	:	:	:	:	: 25,000

4. F. W. Gist, Alabama Farm Production, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Montgomery, Alabama, January 1, 1930, 3, 2-4.



Moffett State Farm

Moffett State Farm is a prison farm located ten miles northwest of Atmore. It was purchased under the powers of the Board of Administration to sell and purchase agricultural land,⁵ and it was named for Mr. Charles A. Moffett, President of the State Board of Administration.

The original purchase included 3640 acres, bought from Mr. C. C. Huxford and wife March 8, 1928, with an additional purchase of 4728 acres on September 30, 1929, making a total of 8368 acres.⁶

The farm was created with the prime purpose of being a demonstration point for the state's agricultural workers. It is a modern, up-to-date place where the prisoners are well treated and cared for.⁷

There are now 878 prisoners at the Farm.⁸

5. Code of Alabama, 1923, 158, section 3586.

6. Information given to the writer in the office of the Board of Administration, Montgomery, September 24, 1930.

7. The Atmore Advance, August 28, 1930.

8. Letter from Mr. G. K. Fountain, warden, to the writer January 9, 1931.

Mr. Hamp Draper, head of the state convict department, estimated the state's investment at Moffett prison farm at approximately \$250,000, which would be entirely paid for in five years. He pointed out that the per capita prisoner investment at Moffett is \$150 as compared with \$2,500 at Kilby prison.⁹

Alms House

The county Alms House is located at Brewton, at a cost of \$3,000. There are fourteen inmates now in the Alms House.¹⁰

Highway Number 31

United States Highway Number 31, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf, passes through the entire length of the county.¹¹ At Mobile this route connects with the Old Spanish Trail, the only all-year, all-weather, trans-continental highway, extending from Jacksonville to San Diego. Local road conditions are better than the average, and the through routes make motor travel easy and delightful to almost any desired destination.¹²

9. Mobile Register, April 13, 1930.

10. Fr. C. R. Fountain, op. cit.

11. American Association of State Highway Officials, United States Numbered Highways, 12, Washington, 1929.

12. Industrial Survey, op. cit., 6.

Post Offices and Towns

Atmore	3	Humboldt	
Brewton	4	McGullough	
Canoe		Nokomis	
Flomaton	2	Pollard	
Freenarville		Wallace	13

Population

Year	White	Negro	Total
1870	3,047	951	4,041
1880	4,106	1,590	5,719
1890	4,843	2,650	8,666
1900	7,683	3,515	11,320
1910	13,156	5,569	18,889
1920	15,878	6,586	22,464

Percentage Increase

1910 to 1920	18.9	
1900 to 1910	66.9	
1890 to 1900	30.6	
1880 to 1890	51.5	
1870 to 1880	41.5	14

13. United States Official Postal Guide, 1920. Figures indicate the number of rural routes.
14. United States Census, 1, 27, 1920.

The population of Escambia County is mostly rural.
 In 1920, urban 2,632; rural 19,732.¹⁵

Total population,	22,464	
male	11,137	
female	11,277	
Native white	15,326	
male	7,944	
female	7,382	
Native white-native		
parentage	15,662	
foreign parentage	50	
mixed parentage	114	
Foreign born white	52	
male	33	
female	19	
Negro	6,293	
male	3,065	
female	3,226	
Indians	392	
Chinese	1	
Per cent native white	70.5	
Per cent foreign born white	0.2	
Per cent negro	28.0	16

15. 1912., 130.

16. United States Census, 1, 61, 1920.

According to information compiled by the Census Bureau, Escambia gained over 5000 in population since the last count. Escambia County now has a total population of 27,963 or an increase of about 5,500 over the number of inhabitants as shown by the 1920 census, which gave this county an official population of 22,464.¹⁷

Property Valuation of Escambia County

Assessed value in 1922, \$9,162,167

Acres, 612,400 ¹⁸

Vacant public lands on July 1, 1926

120 acres surveyed, broken, sandy pine land.¹⁹

Report of the Survey of Escambia County Schools, issued by the authority of the State Board of Education 1929:

Prior to this survey the Escambia County Board of Education had already undertaken a rather extensive and very commendable program of school building. Including the children who attend the city schools of Atmore and Brewton, it may be said that about 55 per cent of the white children of Escambia County where the other conditions are similar, now enjoy school building facilities that compare favorably with those of any equal area of the United States.

17. The Atmore Advertiser, July 5, 1930.

18. Escambia Statistical and Statistical Register, 436.

19. Id., 470.

White school census 1920-1923 (ages 6-20)

Year	School census	Increase	Percentage increase
1920	6113		
1922	6268	155	2.5
1924	6382	114	1.8
1926	6692	310	4.9
1928	6979	287	4.3

Negro school census 1920-1928 (ages 6-20)

1920	2263		
1922	2554	291	12.9
1924	2643	89	3.5
1926	2710	77	2.5
1928	2996	286	10.6

Percentage relationship between census and enrollment

Year	Census	Enrollment	Percentage
1920-1921	6113	5019	82.1
1922-1923	6268	5216	83.2
1924-1925	6382	4960	77.7
1926-1927	6692	4870	72.8

Percentage relationship between enrollment and average daily attendance.

Year	Enrollment	Average daily Attendance	Percentage
1920-1921	5019	3294	65.6
1922-1923	5216	3272	62.7
1924-1925	4960	3309	66.7
1926-1927	4370	3328	68.3

Percentage relationship between school census and daily attendance.

Year	Census	Average daily Attendance	Percentage
1920-1921	6113	3294	53.9
1922-1923	6268	3272	52.2
1924-1925	6332	3309	51.8
1926-1927	6692	3328	49.7

Total number of schools in 1920-1921, 72

Total number of schools in 1928-1929, 47 ²⁰

The Delegates to the Constitutional Convention from Escambia County were: 1875, W. J. O'Bannon, 1901, Norville R. Leigh, Jr. ²¹

20. J. C. Weaver Superintendent of Education of Escambia County.

21. Political Code of Alabama, 1, 481-485, 1905.

State Senators

The senators representing Escambia County during the following years were:

1876-7,	R. C. Torrey.
1878-9,	R. C. Torrey.
1880-1,	W. I. Pittman.
1882-3,	W. Y. Pittman.
1884-5,	J. M. Davison.
1886-7,	J. M. Davison.
1888-9,	Daniel Williams.
1890-1,	Daniel Williams.
1892-3,	W. B. Kemp.
1894-5,	W. B. Kemp.
1896-7,	C. S. Lee.
1898-9,	C. S. Lee.
1900 (Special),	C. S. Lee.
1902-03,	D. D. Hall.
1904,	D. D. Hall.
1905,	O. C. Bayles.
1907 (Special),	O. C. Bayles.
1909 (Special),	O. C. Bayles, deceased).
1911,	E. M. Lovelace.
1913,	E. M. Holmes.
1915,	Riley Kelly.
1917,	Leon Brooks.
1919,	Sibley Holmes.
1921,	E. E. Willard. 22

CC. State Journals and General Acts of Alabama.

(Dates given above).

Representatives

Essex County was represented in the state legislature during the following years by:

1876-7,	W. Y. Fitcham.
1878-9,	M. Lyons.
1880-1,	T. S. Sewell.
1882-3,	J. C. Avant.
1884-5,	W. J. O'Dannon.
1886-7,	M. A. Rabb.
1888-9,	M. A. Rabb.
1890-1,	E. P. Lovelace.
1892-3,	E. M. Lovelace.
1894-5,	M. A. Rabb.
1896-7,	J. H. L. Henley.
1898-9,	G. W. L. Smith.
1899 (Special)	G. W. L. Smith.
1900-01,	J. H. L. Henley.
1903,	Horvella R. Leigh, Jr.
1907,	J. H. L. Henley.
1907, (Special)	J. H. L. Henley.
1909, (Special)	J. H. L. Henley.
1911,	Louis Marshall McLendon.
1915,	O. M. Gordon.
1919,	Sidney M. Jones.
1923,	J. H. L. Henley.
1927,	Yancey Lovelace.
1931,	G. R. Swift.

25

23. House Journals and General Acts of Alabama.

(Dates given above).

The deaths from Escambia County in the World War, as reported in United States Official Bulletin, January 1, 1919 to March 29, 1919 were:

Cunningham, Clifford,	Atmore
Hall, Eugene L.,	Atmore
Johnson, Joe O.,	Atmore
McGhee, Riley,	Atmore
Rushing, Billy Glenn,	Atmore
Salter, Thomas V.,	Atmore
Adams, John	Brewton
Brown, Everett H.,	Brewton
Edwards, Joe,	Brewton
Emmons, Abraham,	Brewton
Hardy, Adrian F.,	Brewton
McArthur, Robert G.,	Brewton
McCall, Claude M.,	Brewton
McEntire, William J.,	Brewton
Parker, Judson C.,	Brewton
Smith, James F.,	Brewton
White, Ned A.,	Brewton
Dunson, Henry,	Canoe
Stanton, Albert E.,	Canoe
Johnson, Sam O.,	Flomaton
Ledkins, William J.,	Flomaton
Morris, Dewey,	Flomaton
Blackman, John,	Foshee
Steele, Walter,	Foshee
Digman, Kevil,	Freemanville
Johnson, Albert, Jr.,	McCullough
Johnson, Oliver,	Nokomis
Miller, Charlie Cornelius, Wallace	24

Corporal Sidney E. Manning, 167th United States Infantry was one of the two Medal of Honor men of the regiment.

The exploit of Corporal Sidney E. Manning, of Flomaton, Alabama, stood out for nine months of continuous fighting as the most striking in the traditions of Company "G," of which he was a member, according to the commanding officer of the company, Lieut. Richard E. Kelly.

Though severely wounded several times, in the face of accurately placed artillery fire from guns of all calibres executed from the rear and from both flanks, and despite machine gun fire from the bald slopes, Corporal Manning stood by his post, assumed command of the platoon, pushed over the crest of the hill, and led the platoon against an enemy strong point which dominated the entire valley of the Oureq, and which was wired, entrenched, and strongly defended with machine guns.²⁵

Downing - Shofner Institute for Girls

Dr. J. M. Shofner, founder and president of the Downing-Shofner Institute for Girls, labored day and night for eighteen years developing this school.

The first gift of \$100 came from Miss Martha Vincent, of Rehoboth, Alabama. The second gift came from Miss Grace

25. William H. Inerino, Alabama's Gun in France, 325-326.

Dodgo, of New York, who contributed annually until her death in 1914. By means of these and other gifts a beginning was made. The first land was purchased in 1901 and in 1906, the school was chartered. It was first operated as a private institution under a board of managers. In 1912 it was transferred to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

In 1924, at a regular annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, Dr. H. C. Moore, then pastor of First Methodist Church, Pensacola, Florida, was elected president.

The school is located one mile east of Brewton. The location is ideal, being high and healthful, and having an environment of natural beauty and wealth of historic interest. A more beautiful site could not have been selected; located on an elevation, it overlooks Brewton on the west; on the south can be seen a beautiful forest, within the shaded haunts of which winds the Pensacola River; to the east elevations greet the vision till the scene merges with southern skies.

Within the grounds are the ruins of Old Fort Crawford, where the student may yet pick up relics from the historic ground.²⁶

²⁶ Catalogue of the Downing-Shepherd Institute, 1900-1931.

Railroads

Mobile and Montgomery Railway Company

The Mobile and Montgomery Railway, extending from Mobile to Montgomery, a distance of 177.36 miles, was built by two separate corporations; namely, the Alabama and Florida Railroad Company and the Mobile and Great Northern Railroad Company.

The Alabama and Florida Railroad Company incorporated February 11, 1850 commenced the construction of a line of railroad from Montgomery to the Alabama-Florida State line, via Pollard, 117 miles, about November, 1854, and completed it on May 3, 1861.

The Mobile and Great Northern Railroad Company incorporated February 15, 1856, completed a line of railroad from Pollard to a point on the border of Tensaw River about forty five miles in the latter part of 1861.

On August 5, 1868, these corporations were consolidated, forming the Mobile and Montgomery Railroad Company. In 1869, point of connection with the Pensacola and Louisville Railroad was changed to Miles Junction (Flomaton), the new extension being .19 miles in length, and the line from Pollard to the Alabama-Florida State line, three and one quarter miles, abandoned.

On November 16, 1874 the property was sold under foreclosure proceedings. On December 17, 1900 the property was conveyed to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad.²⁷

"The old South and North Railroad, boosted along by the Confederate government, was a patchwork line, every sort and kind of rail from 60 pounds T to 30 pounds T and strap rail and stringer! The old railroad men of the State grin broadly to-day whenever they refer to the old original line of the Louisville and Nashville in Alabama. None the less it handled a vast amount of freight from 1863 to 1865."²⁸

The Pensacola and Selma Railroad Company

This Company was organized on March 20, 1880, and on October 22, 1880, the property of the Selma and Gulf Railroad Company was conveyed to it. Construction of the extension from Flomaton to Repton, 29.4 miles, was commenced by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company under contract of February 23, 1880, and completed in 1881. The property was conveyed to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company by deed dated November 23, 1880, but was operated by the latter from March 1, 1880, until October 22, 1880, under contract,

27. Acts of Alabama, 1866, 82.
Joseph C. Kerr, Historical Development of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad System, 99, 1926.

28. 1914., 176.

until November, 1889, as owner, as the Pensacola and
a Division of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad.²⁹

St. Louis and San Francisco Railway

This railroad, commonly called the Frisco, which extends
Kansas City to Pensacola, took charge of the M.S.B. and
. R. in May 1925. The Frisco passes through Atmore and the
own part of the county, giving excellent service to all
west and western states.³⁰

New Buildings

In the fall of 1929 there was constructed in Escambia
city \$130,000 worth of buildings and residences. Besides
idences and business houses, this includes a new water works
tem at Brewton, costing \$40,000; addition to high school at
wton, \$14,000, and hospital and nurses home in Atmore,
,000 or more.³¹

²⁹Ibid., 105.
³⁰Letter to writer from The Atmore Advance, February 23, 1931.
The Birmingham News, September 1, 1929.

CHAPTER IV . TOWNS

Brewton

Brewton was first settled by Andrew Jackson's advance guard, one member of which was Henry Braton for whom the town was named. Why the spelling was changed is not known.¹

Brewton, the county seat of Escambia, is located in the central part of the county, between Burnt Corn Creek and Murder Creek, on the main line of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, between Montgomery and Mobile, about 75 miles north-east of Mobile, and 105 miles southwest of Montgomery. It has an altitude of 85 feet along the railroad,² and a population of more than 3,000 and a trading territory of 10,000 persons.³

It was incorporated by act of February 13, 1885, with corporate limits described as "bounded on the east by Murder Creek, on the west by Burnt Corn Creek, and shall extend one mile north, from the court house in said town, in all directions between the said two creeks."

At the close of the Civil War, Brewton endured the hardships of Reconstruction. There was a Republican administration with the government in the hands of the scalawags.

1. Mr. J. B. O'Donnell (pioneer), interview, August 30, 1939.
2. Alabama Official and Statistical Register, 274.
3. Brewton, Escambia, March 3, 1901.

Jesse Howard, father of the present Mrs. Tom Bridges was the first Probate Judge.⁴ Taxes were collected by the sheriff at this time. There was no superintendent of schools and no regulation of schools. The few schools were taught by foreigners, wandering Englishmen and Irishmen, who would sometimes get drunk and run every one away. No one knew where they came from nor where they went, but they were scholarly. In the 70's there were better teachers who were natives of the state. In 1884 the public school funds for Brewton were \$13.15 for nine months.⁵

The Escambia Banner was the first paper of Brewton, published by McConnell and Blacksher, June 2, 1883.

By order of the Commissioners Court Brewton was declared the County site, April 21, 1883, and the records were subsequently moved from Pollard to Brewton.⁶ An old wooden structure located on the northwest corner of St. Joseph Avenue and Hill Street was used for the court house until a new building could be constructed.

4. Mrs. Tom Bridges, interview, September 4, 1929.

5. Mr. J. B. O'Bannon, pioneer and teacher, interview, August 30, 1929.

6. The Escambia Banner, December 15, 1883.

Since the organization of the county, the names of the probate judges are: Jesse Howard, Frank Bonifay, A. M. McMillan (first Democrat), N. R. Leigh, Senior, M. F. Brooks, E. E. Rushing, M. R. McLellan, and R. E. Adams.⁷

Yellow Fever

On October 4, 1883 an epidemic of yellow fever occurred in Brewton, attacking seventy-five persons and causing the death of twenty-eight. The yellow fever was imported from the Pensacola navy yard, and became more severe on account of the drouth, no rain having fallen for three months.⁸

People knew nothing of the treatment of yellow fever at this time, and, as a preventive, they made tar fires and sulphur fires. The town was almost deserted, and The Banner was suspended from October 6 to November 24.⁹

Some of the brave citizens who ministered to the sick at this time were: Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Rankin, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Arends, Mrs. Mary Lovelace, Mr. Allen Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. M. P. Colley, Mr. and Mrs. William Coleman, and Mr. J. B. O'Bannon.

7. Judge John D. Leigh, interview, September 3, 1929.
8. Brewton Standard, March 5, 1931.
8. Concun-Doconbia Star, published at Evergreen, October 4 to November 22, 1885.
9. The Banner, November 24, 1883.

Some of the faithful negroes were: Henderson Potter, Mike Chestnut, and Aunt Jane Travis.¹⁰

The Flood

On March 14 and 15, 1929 a severe flood swept over Brewton which lasted for several days. The two creeks between which Brewton is located overflowed their banks and the water swept through the town and into the buildings causing much damage and loss. Food was delivered by aeroplane and dropped on the tops of houses; all traffic was delayed for several days.¹¹ Brewton, however, soon recovered and now no traces of the flood can be seen.

Distinguished Citizens

Many distinguished people have gone out from Brewton and carried their culture and wealth to enrich other communities; among these is Mr. George Granberry, famous pianist and teacher of New York City. Mr. Granberry studied music in Boston, and subsequently established a conservatory in New York City which he has made successful. He has twice toured Europe in the interest of his profession. He keeps in touch with the George Granberry Music Club of Brewton, which honored him by

10. W. S. O'Fenton, who has lived in Brewton continuously since 1880, was ten years old when he moved there, and is now tax collector, interview, August 30, 1933.

11. Mobile Register, March 15, 1929.

giving his name to the local musical organization.

Mr. Tom Stevens and Judge H. R. Leigh, Junior, have given their legal talent to Mobile, where they have a lucrative practice.

Earl McGowin, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. McGowin, won a Rhodes scholarship and entered Pembroke College in Oxford in 1922 and finished in 1925. Floyd, the older brother, went over with him and spent one and a half years in Oxford. In 1926 Julian, the third son, entered Oxford where he remained three years. The youngest son, Nicholas, who is a sophomore at the University of Alabama now, is registered at Oxford and expects to enter in 1933 or 1934. The one daughter, Estelle, is a graduate of Vassar, and spent one summer at Fontainebleau, France, studying music. The young men are all engaged in the lumber business with their father at Chapman, Alabama. Earl is now representing Butler County in the State Legislature.¹²

Mrs. Julia McCall was given a trip to Europe by the United States government in 1930 for the purpose of visiting the grave of her son, Claude, who was killed in the World War while courageously discharging his duty in a battle in France.

12. Letter from Mrs. J. G. McGowin, April 23, 1931.

No history of Brewton would be complete without mention of Mr. and Mrs. E. Downing, Senior, who acquired considerable wealth in the timber business. While they were reared at a time when educational advantages were rare, they spared no expense in educating their children, and supporting the schools and churches in their community. They contributed greatly to the development of Brewton, and their names were ever synonymous with kindness and generosity.

Industries and Institutions

Brewton is a modern up-to-date town, and has the distinction of being generally known as the second richest town in the United States to its size. It possesses some of the handsomest residences in south Alabama. It has an electric light plant, waterworks, fire department, ice plant, paved sidewalks and streets, and public parks. There are three state banks in the town - Bank of Brewton, Citizens Bank, and Farmers and Merchants Bank. The Brewton Standard, established in 1907, is a Democratic weekly newspaper published in the town.¹³

The Baptist, Methodist Episcopal, South, Presbyterian, Universalist, and Episcopal churches have organizations and buildings in town.¹⁴

¹³. Personal observation and inquiry.

¹⁴. 1918.

Brewton has two modern school buildings - Grammar School and T. R. Miller City High School.

The chief industries are the T. R. Miller Mill Company and the Brewton Silk Mills. The T. R. Miller Mill Company has expanded until it is known in the entire South as one of this section's greatest industrial plants. The plant in Brewton covers approximately 100 acres and employs 500 persons. The weekly payroll amounts to \$6,000.¹⁵ This company manufactures molding, shingles, lumber, and operates a sash and blind factory, box and basket factory, veneering mill, creosote plant, and turpentine plant.¹⁶

Beautiful Homes

Some of the beautiful homes in Brewton are those built by Messrs. T. R. Miller, S. J. Foshee, Sam Foshee, Yancey Lovelace, E. M. Lovelace, O. F. Luttrell, E. Downing, Wiley Downing, W. M. Strong, Leon Brooks, T. H. Mason, David Miller, John D. Leigh, G. W. L. Smith, J. E. Finlay, D. Gillis, J. T. Boyd, Ed Leigh McMillan, Malcomb McMillan, J. M. Davidson, Alex McGowan.

¹⁵. Brewton Standard, March 5, 1931.

¹⁶. Mr. T. R. Miller, President, interview, September 4, 1929.

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Atmore

Atmore is located in the southwestern corner of Escambia County, on the main line of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. The altitude is 231 feet.¹⁷ The population in 1930 was 3,034. It was settled in 1870, and incorporated in 1907, under the general municipal code.¹⁸

The town has all the modern improvements that other towns of its size usually have. The First National Bank and the Bank of Atmore (State) take care of the financial interests of the community. The Atmore Advance, an independent weekly newspaper established in 1903, is published there. Besides the city public schools, it has the Escambia County High School. Its churches are the Methodist Episcopal, South, Baptist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian.¹⁹

The principal industries are the Carney Lumber Company and the Swift Lumber Company. About 1000 cars of lumber each year are shipped from each mill. More than sixty car loads of strawberries and peaches are shipped annually from Atmore. 30,000 gallons of frigid fruits are shipped each year.²⁰

17. Alabama Official and Statistical Register, 438, 1927.

18. H. M. S. Lewis, City Clerk, interview, September 12, 1930.

19. Ibid.

20. H. J. M. Patterson, President of Carney Mill Company, and Mr. G. R. Swift, President of Swift Lumber Company, interviews, September 12, 1930.

Previous to the coming of the railroad, the locality was settled by William L. Williams, whose establishment was situated at the crossing of the Knoxville and Pensacola, and the Browton and Bay Minette public roads. Upon the completion of the railroad, the station was called Williams Station in honor of the first settler. In 1895 the name was changed to Atmore; for C. P. Atmore, general passenger agent of the Louisville and Mobile Railroad.²¹

Although of comparatively recent development, the town of Atmore is in historic country. Hearsy is a small Indian settlement on which there are about 300 Indians. The Seminole zone and the grave of the famous Creek Indian chief, William Weatherford, are on Little River across the line in the northern part of Baldwin County.²²

Flematon

Flematon is in the southern edge of Escambia County, on Escambia Creek about four miles north of its confluence with the Jonckh River, and on the Louisville and Mobile Railroad, thirteen miles southwest of Browton, forty-four miles north of Pensacola, Florida, and sixty miles northeast of Mobile.²³

21. C. E. W. Brooks (plumber), interview, September 12, 1930. Former minister for 34 years, now Justice of the Peace in Atmore.
22. Interview has visited these places.
23. *Historical Statistics and Descriptive Statistics*, 1874.

the altitude is 100 feet; ²⁴ the population is about 1000 according to the last census.

In 1872 Major Reuter and associates rebuilt the railroad from Pensacola and connected it at Flomaton instead of Pollard, turning in at Century, Florida, to keep from rebuilding the bridges across Big Escambia and Little Escambia Rivers which had been burned during the Civil War. ²⁵

The town was first called Monticello; later it was called Whiting in honor of a stock holder of the road. It was known by all the country side as Pensacola Junction. Dr. James A. Wilkenson, a prominent physician of Flomaton at that time, got up a petition to have the name changed to Flo-ma-the first three letters of Florida and the last two of Alabama, since the town was on the state line. The Post Office department added the last syllable; thus we have the name Flomaton. ²⁶

The town was incorporated in 1908, under the municipal code of 1907. There is one bank-Escambia County Bank, and four churches-Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, and Holiness. There are two schools- Grammar School and Flomaton High School.

24. Ibid., 445.

25. E. R. W. Brooks, interview, September 12, 1930.

26. Ibid.

The town is most favorably located; it is not only a railroad center, but it is also at the cross roads of several national highways, and it is in an excellent farming region.

The flood of March 14 and 15, 1929, swept over Elenaton and caused a great deal of loss and damage, but, like Brewton, it soon recovered and is growing very rapidly.²⁷

Pollard

Pollard is a small town located in the southern part of Escambia County, on the main line of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. Its altitude is 73 feet.²⁸

Its largest population, according to the United States Census, was in 1920 when it contained 631 persons. At present it is smaller, because the lumber mill has been discontinued, and the Bank of Pollard was taken over by the Farmers and Merchants Bank of Brewton, September 4, 1934.²⁹

It was the first county site, and so continued until the seat of justice was moved to Brewton in 1883.

Mr. Charles T. Pollard, for whom the town was named, was president of the Alabama and Florida Railroad. Pollard was the junction point from Montgomery to the Texas River. During the war the track was torn up from Pollard to Pensacola to

27. Letter from Mrs. Marye S. Washburn, January 26, 1931.
28. Alabama Railroad and Transportation Statistics, 448.
29. The Escambia Journal, Escambia, Brewton, September 27, 1934.

prevent the yankees from coming to the interior. Pollard
 is a military post, being the depot and headquarters for
 the Confederate troops detailed to watch Pensacola, before
 Florida had seceded. In January 1865, a sharp conflict
 between General J. H. Clanton and a body of Federal raiders
 occurred at Pollard, and later the town was burned.³⁰

McCullough

McCullough is a small town with a population of 450
 people, located on the Frisco Railroad, thirteen miles north
 of Atmore. The town was named for Mr. W. H. McCullough, one
 of the oldest citizens of the community.

A grammar school, a high school, one bank, six stores,
 and two gins are located in the town.

McCullough is situated in one of the richest farming
 sections of the South.³¹

Canoe

Canoe is a splendid little town of 300 persons located
 five miles east of Atmore, on the Louisville and Nashville
 Railroad, in the midst of a rich farming section.

The town was named for Canoe Creek, which the Indians
 christened.

³⁰. Mr. R. W. Brooks, op. cit.
³¹. Letter from Mr. L. H. Friskell, Post Master, September 12,
 1930.

Canoe has a grammar school, junior high school, three
churches - Methodist, Baptist, and Christian, several stores,
and a gin. Many strawberries, potatoes, and much cotton are
grown there.⁵²

Mr. John F. Day (violinist), interview, September 19, 1936.

SUMMARY

- 1565, Florida, of which Escambia County was a part was settled by the Spaniards.
- 1682, La Salle claimed the territory for France.
- 1719, The French seized Pensacola, expecting to extend their authority to the sea.
- 1721, Florida was returned to Spain.
- 1763, All Florida became an English province.
- 1781, Spain seized West Florida.
- 1783, All Florida went to Spain.
- 1795, Treaty of Madrid located the boundary line at 31° .
- 1802, Georgia relinquished her claim.
- 1803, United States purchased Louisiana and claimed West Florida.
- 1813, United States captured West Florida.
- 1814, By treaty of Fort Jackson, the Creek Indians gave up claims to land that included Escambia County.
- 1819, Spain sold all Florida to United States.
- 1861, Alabama seceded.
- 1865, Alabama returned to the union.
- 1868, Escambia County was formed.

A study of Macomb County reveals the fact that it was wonned about like a tennis ball among several nations before the present county was formed, and that whoever attempts to explain it might be guilty of an impropriety.

The study shows that Macomb County was originally the home of the Creek Indians and, through the efforts of General Jackson, the land was cleared for white settlement.

The county was at first divided into three parts, the first being the territory of Washington County, Monroe County, Genesee County, and finally Macombia was formed in 1868.

Wheat fields were at first the principal industry, but now the county is primarily agricultural, with a population of 27,965, and a property valuation of nearly \$10,000,000.

Macomb County is fortunate in having four different railroad lines operating through its territory, and one of the principal highways of the country running through its whole length. With three large progressive towns and several smaller ones, Macomb County is a community that is, and shows evidence of still greater development.

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